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THE
ASSURANCE MAGAZINE,
AND JOURNAL OF
THE INSTITUTE OF ACTUARIES.

Report of the Proceedings at the Statistical Congress, held at Brussels, 19th to 22nd September, 1853. By SAMUEL BROWN, F.S.S., one of the Honorary Secretaries of the Institute of Actuaries.

THE study of statistics is so peculiarly connected with the vocation and intellectual pursuits of the actuary, that I feel convinced there is no member of the Institute who will not be interested in a full report of the very important meeting recently held at Brussels. I apprehend that the real business of the actuary is the reasoning on all events to which the mathematics of probability can be applied, and reducing the conclusions to a form in which they can be practically used for the public benefit. His study is the doctrine of averages; and though his functions have been hitherto confined in a great measure to subjects relating to the assurance of human life, there are evidently many other topics to which, in time, his attention ought to be directed. The discovery of the mathematical laws of events will eventually be recognized as the sole means of bringing uncertainty to certainty, and out of irregularity deducing order. Whilst men depend only on their individual experience and skill, without consulting the laws deduced by mathematics from a large collection of facts, they will often be astonished, as they frequently are now, in fire and marine assurance, by fluctuations which upset all their rules of practice, but which the mathematician, if he had been furnished with the previous results of their experience, would have predicted with almost unerring

certainty.* The object of statistics is the collection of facts from which the mathematician may deduce the laws of social, moral, and physical phenomena.

The value of statistical inquiries has not been publicly recognized in Great Britain for any great length of time. The establishment of the Statistical Society, in 1834, was the first successful attempt to bring together those who were engaged in a common pursuit, and to render the results of their isolated labours not only capable of being compared together, but more useful for the practical purposes of government and for the public good. The formation of the Society tended not only to remedy the defects and errors of past modes of observation, but to give an impetus to studies which the growing desire to collect facts before deducing theories has rendered doubly interesting in this practical age. The Conference which has recently taken place at Brussels had the same object in view, but on a more enlarged scale; and it is difficult to overrate its importance. Whatever progress statistics may have made in a kingdom, will be greatly accelerated by a comparison with what has been effected in other countries. Governments may, besides, be induced to take more enlarged views in collecting such returns as serve to show by actual facts the social, commercial, industrial, or educational condition of a people. On many subjects, too, especially in the statistics of population and commerce, it is important to be able to compare the changes that may be going on, and the effects they produce on the industry and trade of different nations; and it is evident that much labour is thrown away unless a general system of uniformity could be arranged, under which facts might be collected and published relating to the same periods, and classified under some general heads.

It is greatly to the credit of Belgium, and exhibits in a most favourable point of view the liberal and enlightened principles of her Government, that the idea of bringing together from all parts of Europe official authorities or distinguished writers on statistics and political economy should be there so practically and energetically carried out. That success has been so completely achieved, is owing to the zeal and energy and the wide-world reputation of M. Quetelet, the distinguished President of the Commission Centrale de Statistique de Belgique, and Directeur de l'Observatoire

* It has become the custom of late, for those who set themselves against mathematical conclusions in the doctrines of probability, to call themselves "the men of business"; as if theory and practice were necessarily opposed to each other. On the same principle, the physician who has studied most deeply the organization of the human frame and the disorders to which it is subject, is the last person whom we ought to consult in practice.

Royal de Bruxelles. Without his indefatigable exertions, and the certainty of which his name and writings were a warrant, that the reunion proposed would not end in idle results, but be the commencement of a new era in statistical science, it might have been difficult to have united both Governments and individuals in a common purpose.

It is gratifying to reflect that this Congress, like the one which the Institute of Actuaries had the honour of calling in connection with assurance subjects, is another of the results of the Great Exhibition, which has been the means of stimulating so many nations to a peaceful and honourable rivalry in science, industry, and art. I am informed by M. Quetelet that it was in 1851, in conversation with two distinguished and now lamented members of the Statistical Society (Messrs. G. R. Porter and Joseph Fletcher), that the original proposition was first mooted, though it could not immediately be carried out. In May, 1852, the Commission Centrale de Statistique de Belgique issued a circular to their correspondents to consult them as to the advantage of the proposed reunion, and the nature of the subjects that could be most usefully discussed. The idea was well received, but various circumstances hindered the earlier realization of the project; and it was not till May, 1853, that, having obtained the authorization of the Belgian Government to the meeting, the invitations were sent out, accompanied by a programme of the questions to be considered. The comprehensive nature of this programme will be understood by the following brief summary of the contents:—The first section embraces the organization of statistics, census of the population, the territorial surveys, and valuation of land; the second section comprises the statistics of agriculture, industry, and commerce; and the third section includes the economical condition of the working classes, pauperism, means of instruction and state of education, crime and its suppression. In order to economize the time and labour of the assembly, the rules and regulations to be submitted as a preliminary step for the government of the assembly were also proposed; and the best proof of the simplicity and foresight with which they had been prepared was the admirable order with which a body composed of men from all parts of Europe—some officially interested in certain systems, others by their positions or published works opposed thereto, and several having their peculiar views on many debateable points—were yet enabled to discuss with calmness, temper, and dignity, and resolve upon, a general programme, embracing subjects the most complex and varied that can be imagined,

and involving questions both social and political, of the most intense interest.

The Congress was opened on Monday, the 19th September, and assembled in the rooms of the Académies Royales des Sciences et de Médecine. About 100 members were present. At about half-past eleven o'clock, M. Quetelet, Président de la Commission Centrale de Statistique, took the chair. The other members of the Committee of Organization—M. Piercot, Minister of the Interior; MM. Partoes, Visschers, Le Général Trumper, M. Rivort, and MM. Heuschling and Ducpetiaux, the Secretaries—took their seats with him.

M. QUETELET, having in a few words introduced the subject of the Congress, called upon M. HEUSCHLING, the Secretary of the Commission Centrale de Statistique, to read the names of the gentlemen who had given in their support to the Congress.

A complete list of the names follows, in order to preserve a record of the distinguished men who at this time are devoting their attention to the study of statistics. The members marked thus * were present, and took part in the proceedings.

AUTRICHE.

*M. LE BARON DE CZOERNIG, chef de section au ministère du commerce et des travaux publics, directeur de la statistique administrative, à Vienne.

BAVIÈRE.

*M. F.-G. DE HERMANN, conseiller au ministère des finances, à Munich.
M. DENZINGER, professeur de statistique à l'université de Wurzburg.

BELGIQUE.

- *M. ARNOULD, administrateur-inspecteur de l'université de Liège.
- *M. LE COMTE ARRIVABENE, à Bruxelles.
- M. BENOIT, régisseur de la terre de Marche-les-Dames, à Namur.
- *M. BOVY, membre de la députation permanente, à Hasselt.
- M. BOSCH, colonel du génie, à Arlon.
- *M. PHILIPPE BOURSON, directeur du *Moniteur*, à Bruxelles.
- M. JEAN-BAPTISTE BIVORT, chef de division au ministère de l'intérieur, à Bruxelles.
- M. BELLEFROID, chef de division au ministère de l'intérieur, à Bruxelles.
- *M. FLORIAN BALLIEU, chef de bureau au ministère des travaux publics, à Bruxelles.
- *M. CAMBRELIN, président de la commission médicale, à Namur.
- *M. CROUSSE, directeur des contributions directes, à Namur.
- M. F. CORBISIER, membre de la chambre de commerce de Mons.
- *M. E. COGÈLS, ancien sénateur, à Anvers.
- M. ULYSSE CAPITAIN, à Liège.
- M. L'ABBE CARTON, directeur de l'institute des sourds, muets, et des aveugles, à Bruges.
- *M. RENIER CHÂLON, correspondant de l'académie royale, à Bruxelles.
- *M. AUG. CLAVAREAU, docteur en droit, chef de bureau au ministère des finances, à Bruxelles.
- *M. SEBASTIEN COSTANTINI, secrétaire de la caisse des propriétaires, à Bruxelles.
- *M. ARMAND DE PERCEVAL, membre de la chambre des représentants, à Malines.
- M. DEROTE, administrateur-inspecteur de l'université de Gand.
- *M. DE CORSWAREM, ancien représentant, à Hasselt.

- *M. LE BARON DE SELYS-LONGCHAMPS, à Waremme (Liège).
- M. A. DUFOUR, greffier provincial, à Mons.
- *M. A.-J. DELNEUF-COUR, ingénieur des mines, membre de la chambre de commerce de Mons.
- M. CHARLES DE BROUCKERE, bourgmestre de la ville de Bruxelles, membre de la chambre des représentants, à Bruxelles.
- *M. JOS. DIEUDONNE, membre de l'académie de médecine, à Bruxelles.
- *M. LE DOCTEUR JULES D'UDEKEM, à Bruxelles.
- *M. EDOUARD DUCPETIAUX, inspecteur des prisons, à Bruxelles.
- *M. FRANÇ.-CH. DE LANNOY, conseiller à la cour d'appel de Bruxelles.
- *M. CH. DE HOFFMANN, secrétaire général de la compagnie d'assurance générale sur la vie et contre l'incendie, à Bruxelles.
- M. FALLOT, vice-président de l'académie royale de médecine de Belgique, à Bruxelles.
- *M. THOMAS FORSTER, astronome, à Bruxelles.
- *M. GUOITH, ingénieur des ponts et chaussées, à Anvers.
- *M. J. DAUBY, inspecteur général honoraire de l'enregistrement, à Bruxelles.
- *M. GACHARD, archiviste général du royaume, à Bruxelles.
- *M. JEAN-BAPTISTE GROETAEYS, capitaine du génie en non-activité, à Saint-Josse-ten-Noode.
- *M. HENNAU, professeur d'économie politique à l'université de Liège.
- M. LEOPOLD HALBRECH, secrétaire de la commission d'agriculture, à Mons.
- *M. J.-E. HORN, à Bruxelles.
- *M. FREDERIC HAIRION, professeur à l'université de Louvain.
- *M. XAVIER HEUSCHLING, chef de division au ministère de l'intérieur, secrétaire de la commission centrale de statistique, à Bruxelles.
- *M. LE DOCTEUR HANNON, à Nivelles.
- *M. HUART, avoué, à Bruxelles.
- M. ISTA, commissaire du gouvernement près la société générale, à Bruxelles.
- M. JACQUELART, directeur des contributions, à Arlon.
- *M. EDOUARD JUSTE, professeur de rhétorique latine, à Arlon.
- *M. AUGUSTE KREGLINGER, commissaire du gouvernement près la banque nationale, à Bruxelles.
- M. HENRI KERVYN, inspecteur provincial de l'enseignement primaire, à Gand.
- M. LAMBRECHTS, président de la commission médicale d'Anvers.
- *M. LEJEUNE, inspecteur du cadastre, à Hasselt.
- M. A.-F. LACROIX, archiviste provincial, à Mons.
- *M. LENTZ, chef de division au ministère de la justice, à Bruxelles.
- *M. ALPHONSE LECLERCQ, docteur en médecine, à Bruxelles.
- *M. LE DOCTEUR LEBON, à Nivelles.
- *M. MINET, receveur des droits de navigation, à Namur.
- M. MAGIS, ingénieur-en-chef, directeur des ponts et chaussées, à Hasselt.
- *M. LE DOCTEUR MARESKA, à Gand.
- *M. VICTOR MISSON, commissaire d'arrondissement, à Mons.
- *M. HIPPOLYTE MATHIEU, secrétaire de la caisse de retraite, à Bruxelles.
- *M. MELSENS, professeur à l'école vétérinaire de l'état, à Bruxelles.
- *M. LE DOCTEUR MARINUS, secrétaire-adjoint de l'académie royale de médecine, à Bruxelles.
- *M. ALPHONSE MOREAU, agronome, à Bruxelles.
- *M. MOLINARI, professeur d'économie politique, à Bruxelles.
- *M. PARTOES, secrétaire général au ministère des travaux publics, à Bruxelles.
- *M. EDOUARD PERROT, rédacteur-en-chef de *l'Indépendance belge*, à Bruxelles.
- *M. PUTZEYS, directeur au ministère de la justice, à Bruxelles.
- *M. JEAN-BAPTISTE PINCHARD, receveur des contributions, à Bruxelles.
- *M. ADOLPHE QUETELET, directeur de l'observatoire royal, président de la commission centrale de statistique, à Bruxelles.
- M. QUOILIN, secrétaire général du ministère des finances, à Bruxelles.
- M. RAINGO, directeur de l'école d'agriculture de la Trapperie.
- *M. E. RAINBEAUX, industriel, à Mons.
- *M. JOSEPH REDEMANS, médecin de la maison du Roi, membre du conseil de salubrité publique d'Ixelles.
- *M. DIEUDONNE SAUVEUR, inspecteur du service de santé civil, à Bruxelles.
- *M. AUGUSTE SCHELER, bibliothécaire-adjoint du Roi, à Bruxelles.
- M. SOVET, médecin de la maison du Roi, à Beauraing.
- *M. T'KINT DE NAEYER, membre de la chambre des représentants.
- *M. THEIS, secrétaire du conseil supérieur d'hygiène, à Bruxelles.

- *M. LE GENERAL MAJOR TRUMPER, à Hasselt.
- *M. FRANÇOIS THOMAS, directeur général du chemin de fer de Turnhout, à Bruxelles.
- *M. VANDERMEERSCH, archiviste provincial, à Gand.
- *M. PHIL. VANDERMAELEN, fondateur de l'établissement géographique, à Bruxelles.
- *M. VANLERBERGHE, à Kain (près de Tournai).
- *M. VLEMINCKX, inspecteur général du service de santé de l'armée, président de l'académie royale de médecine, à Bruxelles.
- *M. VAN DEN BULCKE, commissaire d'arrondissement de Bruges et d'Ostende.
- *M. AUGUSTE VISSCHERS, conseiller des mines, à Bruxelles.
- *M. CESAR-ALEX. VANDERZANDEN, sous-inspecteur au ministère des travaux publics, à Bruxelles.
- *M. ABEL WAROCQUIE, industriel, à Marimont.
- *M. VICTOR WALTER, conseiller communal, à Bruxelles.
- *M. VAN MEENEN, président de chambre à la cour de cassation de Belgique, à Bruxelles.
- *M. T. LARCHEVEQUE, professeur, à Bruxelles.
- *M. JANSSENS, inspecteur au ministère des travaux publics, à Bruxelles.
- *M. COQUIL, économiste, à Anvers.
- *M. DURANT, homme de lettres, à Bruxelles.
- *M. STAS, professeur à l'école militaire, à Bruxelles.
- *M. LE BARON DE CRASSIER, secrétaire général du ministère de la justice, à Bruxelles.
- *LE DOCTEUR VERSTRAETEN, vérificateur des décès, à Bruxelles.

DANEMARK.

- *M. BERGSOE, professeur d'économie politique et chef du département de la statistique, à Copenhague.
- *M. CHRETIEN DAVID, conseiller d'état, à Copenhague.

DEUX-SICILES.

- M. LE CHEVALIER BENOIT CANTALUPO, conseiller à la cour de justice, à Naples.

EGYPTE.

- *MAHMOUD EFFENDI et ISMAEL EFFENDI, astronomes au Caire.

ESPAGNE.

- *M. RAMON DE LA SAGRA, commissaire espagnol, à Madrid.

ETATS-UNIS.

- M. DE BAW, chef du bureau de statistique fédérale, à New York.

FRANCE.

- *M. ALFRED LEGOYT, chef du bureau de statistique générale de France, au ministère de l'agriculture, du commerce, et des travaux publics, à Paris.
- *M. MOREAU DE JONNES, membre de l'institut de France, à Paris.
- *M. MAURICE BLOCK, sous-chef au ministère de l'agriculture, du commerce, et des travaux publics, à Paris.
- *M. BENOISTON DE CHATEAUNEUF, membre de l'institut de France, à Paris.
- *M. AYMAR BRESSION, secrétaire général de la société française de statistique universelle, à Paris.
- *M. LE DOCTEUR BOUDIN, médecin-en-chef de l'hôpital militaire du Roule, à Paris.
- *M. MAGENDIE, membre de l'institut, à Paris.
- *M. LE DOCTEUR ROUX, secrétaire perpétuel de la société de statistique de Marseille.
- *M. HORACE SAY, ancien conseiller d'état, l'un des vice-présidents de la société d'économie politique de Paris.
- *M. LOUIS-RENNE VILLERME, membre de l'institut, à Paris.
- *M. VALENTIN SMITH, conseiller à la cour d'appel de Lyon.
- *M. WOŁOWSKI, directeur du crédit foncier de France, à Paris.
- *M. SIGEFROID WEISS, à Paris.
- *M. DUPLAN, avocat à la cour impériale, rédacteur du *Journal de l'Empire*, à Paris.
- *M. DE LA NOURAIS, à Versailles.

- M. GUILLAUMIN, éditeur du *Journal des Economistes*, à Paris.
*M. JOSEPH GARNIER, rédacteur-en-chef du *Journal des Economistes*.
*M. ACHILLE GUILLARD, docteur des sciences, à Paris.
*M. BLONDEAU, membre de l'institut, à Paris.
*M. DE LAVEGNE, ancien sous-directeur au département des affaires étrangères, à Paris.

FRANCFORT-SUR-MAINE.

- *M. LE BARON DE REDEN, conseiller du ministère en retraite, à Francfort-sur-Maine.
*M. ALBERT VARRENTTRAPP, secrétaire de la compagnie des assurances, à Francfort-sur-Maine.
*M. GEORGE VARRENTTRAPP, à Francfort-sur-Maine.
*M. LE DOCTEUR ALBERT ULMANN, à Francfort-sur-Maine.

GRAND DUCHE DE BADE.

- *M. CHARLES MITTERMAIER, conseiller intime, professeur à l'université de Heidelberg.
M. ROBERT DE MOHL, professeur à l'université de Heidelberg.
M. RAU, professeur d'économie politique à l'université de Heidelberg.

GREAT BRITAIN.

- DR. LEE, Doctors' Commons, London.
*MR. LEONE LEVI, Professor of Commercial Law at King's College, London.
PROFESSOR MORE, Edinburgh.
*MESSRS. SAMUEL BROWN, F.S.S., and J. HILL WILLIAMS, F.S.S., Honorary Secretaries of the Institute of Actuaries of Great Britain and Ireland, London.
MR. BABBAGE, London.
MR. BANNFIELD, London.
MR. EDWIN CHADWICK, member of the General Board of Health, London.
MR. DOWNES, London.
*VISCOUNT EBRINGTON, London.
MR. F. G. P. NEISON, Honorary Secretary of the Statistical Society of London.
*MR. JAMES ROBERTS, London.
COLONEL SYKES, F.R.S., member of the Council of the Statistical Society of London.
MR. ZIMMERMANN, London.
REV. DR. WHEWELL, F.R.S., President of Trinity College, Cambridge.
*DR. WILLIAM FARR, of the General Registry Office for Births, Deaths, and Marriages, London.
MR. FREDERIC GOSNELL, London.
THE EARL OF HARROWBY, Fellow of the Statistical Society of London.
DR. SOUTHWOOD SMITH, member of the General Board of Health, London.
*DR. JOHNSON, member of the Royal College of Physicians, London and Edinburgh.
*COLONEL DAWSON, London.
*M. DE YSASI, London.
*MR. HENRY HEATH, of the International Postage Association, London.

HAMBOURG.

- *M. CHARLES-GUILLAUME ASHER, docteur en droit, à Hambourg.
M. LE DOCTEUR JULIUS, à Hambourg.
*M. JOHN HARGREAVE, secrétaire général du directeur du libre échange, à Hambourg.

HANOVRE.

- *M. ABEKEN, chef du bureau de statistique, à Hanover.
M. HANSSEN, professeur à l'université de Göttingue.
M. WAPPÆUS, professeur à l'université de Göttingue.

HESSE-CASSEL.

- *M. PFAFF, docteur en sciences et lettres, à Hesse-Cassel.

HESSE GRAND-DUCALE.

- *M. FREDERIC DAEL, conseiller au tribunal de première instance, à Mayence.

Report of the Proceedings at

LUBECK.

M. WEHRMANN, président du comité de statistique de Lubeck.

NORWEGE.

M. LE DOCTEUR FREDERIC HOLST, professeur à l'université de Christiania.

PAYS-BAS.

M. LOBATTO, à la Haye.

*M. ACKERSDYCK, professeur à l'université d'Utrecht.

*M. DE BAUMHAUER, chef du bureau de statistique au ministère de l'intérieur, à la Haye.

*M. GERARD FOKKER, juge de paix, à Middelbourg.

*M. SIMON VISSERING, professeur d'économie politique à l'université de Leyde.

M. WYNNE, négociant à Groningue.

PORTUGAL.

*M. D'AVILA, ministre d'état honoraire et député des Cortès.

PRUSSE.

*M. GUILLAUME LIPKE, économiste, à Berlin.

*M. LE COMTE AUGUSTE CIESZKOWSKI, représentant du grand-duché de Posen, à Berlin.

M. LE DOCTEUR CASPER, à Berlin.

*M. GUILLAUME DIRTERICI, conseiller intime, directeur du bureau de statistique, à Berlin.

M. HELMERS, conseiller supérieur des finances, à Cologne.

M. LEOPOLD RANCKE, membre de l'académie de Berlin.

M. ALEXANDRE SCHNEER, docteur en philosophie, à Ohlau, près Breslau.

*M. SCHUBERT, professeur à l'université de Königsberg.

*M. EDOUARD STOLLE, docteur en philosophie, à Berlin.

*M. OTHON HUBNER, directeur des archives centrales de statistique.

SARDAIGNE.

M. LE COMTE AVOGADRO DI QUAREGNA, à Turin.

M. BONINO, à Turin.

*M. BERNARDIN BERTINI, député au parlement sarde, à Turin.

M. MANCINI, professeur de droit international, à Turin.

M. PINCHIO, président de la commission de statistique judiciaire des Etats Sardes, à Turin.

M. LE COMTE DE SALMOUR, député et membre de la commission supérieure des Etats Sardes, à Turin.

M. LE COMTE DE SANTA-ROSA, membre du parlement, à Turin.

M. LE DOCTEUR BENOIT TROMPEO, professeur de médecine à l'université de Turin.

M. GIULIO, membre de l'académie royale de Turin.

SAXE-ROYALE.

*M. ERNEST ENGEL, chef du bureau de statistique générale, à Dresde.

M. ALBERT WEINLIG, conseiller intime au ministère de l'intérieur, à Dresde.

M. LE DOCTEUR SCHMALZ, à Dresde.

SUISSE.

*M. MARC D'ESPINE, docteur en médecine, à Genève.

*M. DE MEYER DE KNONAU, directeur du bureau des archives, à Zurich.

M. FRANSCINI, chef du département fédéral de l'intérieur, à Berne.

M. V. SCHOENHEER, de Zurich.

TOSCANE.

M. LE MARQUIS LOUIS RIDOLFI, secrétaire de l'académie economico-agraire de géographes de Florence.

WURTEMBERG.

*M. FALLATI, professeur à l'université de Tubingue.

*M. PAUL SICK, secrétaire du bureau de statistique, à Stuttgart.

*M. GUILLAUME-LOUIS VOLZ, professeur à l'université de Tubingue.

The PRESIDENT then said: Gentlemen, the Committee for the organization of this Congress congratulate themselves on witnessing the complete success of their efforts, and thank you for the confidence which you have shown them in responding to their appeal. Their duties are now terminated; and it remains, gentlemen, for you now to nominate your permanent Council.

M. VILLERME (France): We beg the President and members of the Provisional Committee to remain on the Council (applause).

The PRESIDENT: Gentlemen, my colleagues and myself thank you for this new proof of your confidence. We will endeavour to justify it by our exertions. We must not, however, leave you in ignorance that, if we have succeeded, we owe our success principally to the powerful support which we have received from the Belgian Government. We owe it above all to the Minister of the Interior, M. Piercot, who has been our most constant friend (loud applause). This applause, gentlemen, proves to me that the proposition which I shall have the honour to submit to you will be equally well received. I propose that the Minister of the Interior be elected Honorary President of the Congress.

M. PIERCOT, the Minister of the Interior: Gentlemen, my first desire in being present at the opening of the Statistical Congress is to express to this assembly the sentiments with which I am animated by the honourable testimony which, in my person, the Government has just received from you. Permit me, gentlemen, to commence by thanking you for the cordial manner in which you have received the too flattering language with which the President has mentioned the aid afforded by the Government to your labours. I am also deeply sensible of the marks of esteem with which the whole assembly has accompanied the kind proposition of the President to confer on the Minister of the Interior the Honorary Presidentship of this assembly of science. I accept this high distinction with the most lively gratitude—less as a personal honour (which I cannot believe I have deserved), than as the recompense of those efforts which for many years the Government of this country has made, to create and bring to perfection the work to which you have thus assembled to consecrate your time and the fruits of your studies (applause). Gentlemen, after having expressed to you the sentiments which I deeply feel, permit me to submit to you a few rapid reflections, on the importance of your mission, and on the greatness of the objects which you henceforth pursue in common with the Central Statistical Commission of Belgium.

Suffer me first, gentlemen, to congratulate you, as members of

the Congress, on the generous devotion with which you have begun the work. In responding to the appeal of Belgium, you honour a country which has made it an invariable rule to cultivate, in the midst of peace and by aid of its happy institutions, literature, art and science, moral and political science—that science of administration which comprises within its compass the knowledge of all the mechanism of society.

Statistics—which, as you know better than myself, are calculated to throw a light on every department of government—have taken a high position in Belgium. Whilst all nations were forced by the progress of events towards social improvements, statistics became amongst us one of the first preoccupations of the Government of Belgium, after she had attained her independence. But, gentlemen, it is only justice to the members of the Commission Centrale de Statistique to state, that it is principally since the formation of that Commission that statistics have amongst us grown to such an importance as to render the most extensive services to the country—services of indisputable utility in all the measures which the Government is called upon to take for the development of the national wealth.

The decennial report, which has just appeared, and which we owe to the talents and devotedness of those distinguished men, exhibits the result of labours well combined; and shows what the spirit of investigation can effect, when it has great social interests in view, and above all when that spirit animates the minds of men of experience, uniting the habits of observation to the authority of science.

The most competent judges have hastened to signify their approval of the labours which the Belgian Government have ordered, and to which they have given the greatest publicity. Many foreign Governments, many learned Societies of different countries, have honoured these labours with their sanction. We have been happy, gentlemen, to observe the eagerness with which these Governments and learned Societies have sought copies of the great work which I have just mentioned. The report on the progress of the Belgian nation during the last ten years is now in the hands of the greater part of those men who have devoted themselves to the study of the science of administration, whether in our own country or abroad; and the time is not far distant (we hope so, at least) when every nation participating in the same feeling which has inspired the authors of the statistics of Belgium will desire to obtain a more perfect knowledge of their peculiar resources and powers, not only

as regards the material, but also the moral condition of the people. The science of statistics, devised in a spirit of uniformity, and resting on fixed principles common to all nations, is destined, you will agree with me, to extend its benefits to every country, and to throw new light on the real interests of Governments and the people. Thus understood, it cannot fail to result in drawing still closer the bonds which attach nations to each other, and to strengthen throughout the world those sentiments of fraternity and peace which in these days protect mankind against the return of national rivalries, so happily forgotten (applause). Such, gentlemen, are what we have understood, and these expressions of your approbation leave me no room to doubt they are what you understand, to be the objects of statistics. It is with this great social aim before us that we must endeavour henceforth to extend the domain of the science of statistics, and elevate it to the character of the true ideal of government.

The hopes which I express, gentlemen, on the progress and the result of universal statistics, are not far from being realized. This is the task which you have before you, and you will labour with success to accomplish it. Your presence here is a proof of the sympathetic interest which your respective countries feel in a science which cannot but have a powerful interest on their prosperity. It is also a sure sign, that you will receive from your Governments, whenever you shall feel it your duty to submit to them your views of the importance and vast utility of statistical labours, all the encouragement which a science of such varied extent, and which concerns alike the Government and the people, is entitled to obtain from them.

It remains for me, gentlemen, after this rapid glance at the labours which you are about to undertake, to congratulate my country on the choice which you have made of Belgium, as the first locality for your assembling. My country will respond, gentlemen, to the honour which you have shown us, by an hospitality which we trust to render worthy of you. I hope, that after the conclusion of the labours which devolve upon you, after having formed a closer acquaintance with Belgium, you will carry with you from this country the impression that here you are not only in a friendly land, which is prepared to profit by all the ideas which lead to moral and scientific discoveries, but that you are also amongst a nation of brethren, in which everyone is at liberty to discuss the great truths of social existence, in which everyone applauds generous sentiments, and whatsoever tends to lead men

to elevation of thought and to those studies which are destined hereafter to secure the happiness as well as the progress of nations (prolonged applause).

M. ARRIVABENE (Belgium): We have with acclamations appointed the members of the Provisional Committee to form the permanent Council, and in doing so I believe we have only rendered the homage due to those distinguished men. It is the custom in all assemblies of this kind to nominate Vice-Presidents; and we cannot do better than select them from amongst the members of the different nations who have done honour to Belgium by coming to take part in this Congress. I have consequently the honour to propose to you, as Vice-Presidents of the Congress—

Great Britain	.	.	.	.	MR. WILLIAM FARR.
France	.	.	.	.	M. VILLERME.
Prussia	.	.	.	.	M. DIETERICI.
Germany	.	.	.	.	M. MITTERMAIER.
Netherlands	.	.	.	.	M. ACKERSDYCK.
Spain	.	.	.	.	M. RAMON DE LA SAGRA.
Austria	.	.	.	.	M. LE BARON CZOERNIG.
Italy	.	.	.	.	M. BERTINI.

The proposition was carried unanimously, and the Vice-Presidents took their seats at the President's table.

The PRESIDENT (M. Quetelet) then pronounced the following discourse:—

“Gentlemen, in opening the Congress I will do myself the honour of explaining to you, in a few words, its origin and objects. Every one of you has doubtless been struck with the want of uniformity generally observed in the statistical documents of different countries, and of the impossibility in most cases of instituting comparisons between them. These discrepancies are the cause of a deplorable loss of time, and lead continually to errors of a most grave character. These inconveniences are too evident, and have been too often noticed by men of intelligence, to need being brought more prominently before you.

“It is acknowledged, on the other hand, that the surest method of giving an impetus to science is to perfect its language, and to adopt uniform notations; so as to comprise the largest number of ideas, and to bring together a greater multitude of facts from which to deduce relations and laws.

“These considerations, so simple and elementary, presented themselves with additional force at the time of the Great Exhibition of London—that universal bazaar; at which all the countries

of the civilized world united to display the wonders of their arts and industry. In the midst of these collected treasures, it was not only a confusion of languages which proved an obstacle to the interchange of ideas, but, above all, the difficulty of comparing so many things, and of trying by a common standard the productive powers and riches of so many nations.

"Struck with these inconveniences, a few friends of the political sciences felt the necessity of devising some plan of arriving, as far as possible, at an uniform language. Many of you, gentlemen, were in London at this period, and you will doubtless remember that it was then proposed to have special meetings for this purpose; but the preoccupations of the moment caused the proposition to be adjourned. It was agreed to meet at a later period, on a sort of neutral ground, between several of the principal States of Europe; and the rendezvous was fixed for Brussels. It was intended to take place in 1852; but political circumstances compelled it to be put off for another year.

"Unhappily, we shall see no more amongst us some of the principal promoters of this Congress, whose talents and experience would have contributed to throw so much light on our deliberations. It has not been permitted to Messrs. Porter and Fletcher, removed from the world of science by premature death, to be present at an union which they so ardently desired, and of which they fully appreciated the importance. We have equally to regret the absence of Mr. Kennedy, whom political events have removed from the position which he occupied with so much distinction in the United States, and who was also one of the originators of this Congress.

"The Central Statistical Commission of Belgium, depository of their thoughts, and encouraged by the support of men of science of different countries, accepted with pleasure the noble mission which devolved upon them. Henceforth, they neglected no means of arriving by the surest way at the end which they proposed. They consulted the experience of men of science who had devoted themselves specially to statistical researches; and it was only after being strengthened by their cordial co-operation that they laid the foundation of this Congress of peace. They were persuaded that the first efforts of such a reunion should be, above all, to introduce uniformity in the official statistics of different countries, so that the results might be compared together. Without this power of comparison, there could, in fact, be no progress expected in the science of observation.

“It was therefore a principal object that Governments should be interested in the project, and should appreciate its importance. The time appeared the more opportune, that the Belgian Government comprised several of the most enlightened advocates of political studies. Their hopes were not deceived. The Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Foreign Affairs readily interposed their good offices, and invited the foreign Governments to delegate to this Congress those heads of departments who were specially engaged in the preparation of official statistics. France, Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Switzerland, Piedmont, Spain, and Portugal, responded to this appeal, and have sent to us men of science, whose experience we shall be proud to consult.

“Several learned Societies, devoted to political studies, have likewise shown their sympathy with the objects of this Congress. Some have desired to be represented at it; and we gratefully record amongst them the Société Royale de Belgique, the Statistical Society of London, the Société d'Economie Politique de Paris, the Edinburgh Committee for the formation of an International Code of Commercial Laws, the Commission Supérieure de Statistique of the Sardinian States, the Société des Géographes de Florence, the Société de Statistique de Marseilles, &c.

“On the other hand, the provincial Statistical Commissions of this kingdom have not only sent delegates, but, in order to assist in the solution of one of the most interesting questions in our programme—that relative to the condition of the labouring classes—they have forwarded to us documents of the greatest importance, which will be submitted to your examination.

“It is only after an attentive study of the social system that we can comprehend its tendencies and its wants; it is only after carefully probing the wounds that we can propose the suitable treatment.

“Nothing can more completely display the universal accord with which the idea of the Congress has been received, than the simple statement of the fact that no less than twenty-six different countries are represented amongst the members present.

“In viewing this imposing assembly, we are happy in noticing another significant and important fact—the presence of a great number of the most distinguished political economists. Their presence here refutes the doctrine which some weak or superficial minds advocate, of a necessary divorce between statistics and political economy—between observation and science—which, on the

contrary, afford each other a mutual support, and throw light the one on the other. The science of statistics undoubtedly has been guilty of some vagaries—has lent itself to some abuses: by supporting false systems, or giving currency to preconceived ideas, it has undoubtedly sometimes strayed beyond its proper limits; but intelligent minds would never think of proscribing a science, and especially one newly created, because it has occasionally wandered from its true direction. Did not astrology for some time usurp the place of the true science of astronomy, and alchemy the rank due to that of Lavoisier and Berzelius? Every science has marked the beginning of its career by mistakes—often, by abuses to be deplored. It is not that the science of statistics has erred that should cause our astonishment, but that it should, at so early a date, have comprehended its mission and felt the necessity of regulating its steps.

“This Congress will, if I mistake not, be the beginning of a new era for statistics. The science is passing through the phases of other sciences, her elder sisters, who have felt the like necessity of adopting a common language, and of introducing unity and simplicity in their modes of research.

“A few days since, Brussels was witness to the opening of another Congress, having the same tendency, the same object, as this. It was, like ours, designed to bring into friendly relations the observers of different countries—to propose to them uniform methods to simplify their labours, and enable the results to be compared. Their object was the study of the great atmospheric and oceanic currents of the globe. Our researches are equally vast, equally elevated; our aim is to study, in another sphere of observation, the fluctuations of modern society, its currents and its shoals. May we successfully accomplish this noble mission; may we, like them, be privileged to serve the cause of science and the interests of humanity (applause).”

(To be continued.)
